



Wisconsin's Runoff Management Rules

NR 120 Priority Watershed and Lake Program

NR 120 is part of 8 Department of Natural Resources rules that address runoff pollution (also known as nonpoint source pollution), the major cause of polluted waters in Wisconsin and the United States

Complete versions of the Runoff Management rules can be obtained by visiting the DNR Runoff Management Program Web page (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/index.htm>) or by contacting:

***Wisconsin DNR
Runoff Management/
WT 2
Attn.: Carol Holden
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
(608)266-0140***

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has administered the Priority Watershed and Priority Lake Program under the authority of NR 120. The old administrative rule included the policies and procedures for selecting and planning watershed projects, along with the policies for administering a related cost-share and technical assistance grant program. The grant program primarily covers cost-sharing grants (nonpoint source) and technical assistance (local assistance) grants for urban and rural governmental units and landowners located within priority watershed or priority lake boundaries.

The new version of NR 120 still covers administration of priority watershed and priority lake projects and will be in effect until all projects have been completed (in calendar year 2009).

Some housekeeping changes are reflected in the new NR 120. For example, the process for selecting priority watershed and priority lake projects has been eliminated. Since state law required all priority watershed and priority lake selections be made by July 1, 1998, the selection process contained in the old rule is obsolete and has been deleted.

Under the new rule, the DNR will administer cost-share and local assistance grants for most urban municipalities in priority watershed projects under NR 153 and NR 155. The focus of the revised NR 120 is the administration of rural nonpoint source grants. The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection will administer rural local assistance grants for priority watershed projects under ATCP 50.

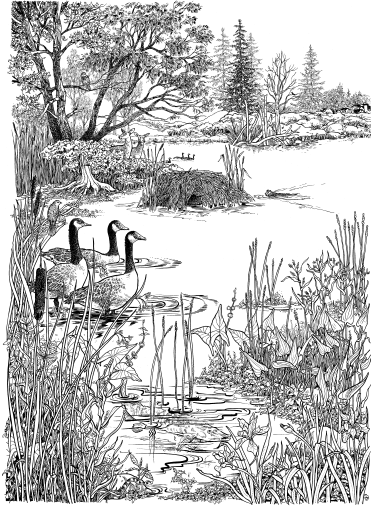
Other important changes in the new NR 120 include the following.

- The standard nonpoint source grant period has been increased from 10 to 12 years so that the State of Wisconsin can provide stable funding for each priority watershed and lake project through its completion.
- DNR procedures that will be utilized to recover unused grant funds have been clarified.



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- Economic hardship provisions have been modified to comply with state law.
- In accordance with state law, provisions that formerly allowed counties to use local matching funds to increase the state cost-share rate for certain management practices have been eliminated.
- In compliance with state law, provisions have been added that make counties fully responsible for 100 percent of cost-share payments made in excess of those authorized by the DNR.
- Rural cost-share rates have been changed to assure at least 70 percent cost sharing is available to landowners. This is consistent with legislative intent that 70 percent of the cost to implement agricultural performance standards be met by cost sharing.



A number of minor changes have been incorporated into the revised NR 120 to reduce the financial burden of project administration. They include recording cost-share agreements; releasing landowners and operators from cost-share agreements, DNR review and approval of cost-share agreements; and single audit requirements.

Other changes dealing with critical site notification have been made in the schedule contained in the revised rule. Grant recipients will now have additional time to fulfill requirements when their grants have been delayed or if funding from the state is inadequate. Also, a provision requiring a grant recipient to provide cost sharing to all critical sites from the reimbursements received from the DNR for the project has been added to the revised rule.

Information about Priority Watershed and Priority Lake programs in your area can be obtained by contacting your local Department of Natural Resources regional office. Contact information is listed in your local telephone book or can be found at the DNR's Web site:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/>